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24        NOV 16 1999    MR. WHITE: Thank you for the opportunity  
25    to be here today to speak at this meeting of the

1 Department of Energy concerning the Environmental  
2 Impact Statement for the national repository for  
3 nuclear waste.

4 My name is Byron White. I'm the  
5 governmental affairs specialist for the Prairie Islands  
6 Indian community in Minnesota. I'm also a formally  
7 elected tribal official.

8 Since most of you probably have never been  
9 to Prairie Island, I would like to direct you to a map  
10 and aerial view I've included in the informational  
11 packet.

12 My community lives in the shadow of a  
13 nuclear power plant and a nuclear waste storage  
14 facility twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.  
15 Nowhere in the United States is a problem of nuclear  
16 waste more evident than at Prairie Island.

1... 17 I'm here today to tell you that we do not  
18 support the No Action alternative under the Nuclear  
19 Waste Act Policy -- Policy Act.

20 The Department of Energy has a  
21 responsibility to remove the waste; unfortunately, the  
22 Department has yet to comply. It's been over a year  
23 since the DOE was supposed to begin removing waste from  
24 Prairie Island and sending it to other communities.  
25 The waste still sits less than 600 yards from our

~~16~~

1 homes, church, and government offices, and there's no  
2 date in sight for its removal.]

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3 [ We didn't ask for a nuclear neighbor. The  
4 power plant was forced on us more than thirty years  
5 ago. Ten years ago the utility was given permission to  
6 temporarily store nuclear waste on Prairie Island.

7 Today we face the real threat that what  
8 has always been called a temporary storage facility  
9 will become permanent. Our children and our children's  
10 children will be forced to live with this very real  
11 health and safety threat.]

12 [ An analysis of Yucca Mountain must include  
13 a complete analysis of transaction issues, including  
14 route transportation packages and health and safety  
15 concerns. All jurisdictions, tribal, state and local,  
16 must be fully prepared for these shipments, and be  
17 included in developing emergency preparedness plans.

3

18 However, when we talk about transporting  
19 nuclear waste, we must remember that the United States  
20 has accepted waste from other countries and shipped it  
21 safely. It just shows where there's a will there's a  
22 way.]

23 [ Since we have lived next to a nuclear  
24 neighbor for more than 30 years, we are very sensitive  
25 to the concerns of the other tribes near Yucca

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4 continued 1 Mountain. I want to emphasize that all tribal concerns  
2 must be addressed, not merely considered. We are the  
3 closest community next to a nuclear power plant and  
4 waste storage facility. We live within feet, not  
5 miles.            Ultimately we must think hard about our  
6 continued reliance on this type of energy.

5 7 Yucca Mountain can't hold all the nuclear  
8 waste that we will generate if we continue using  
9 nuclear power. We are only prolonging the struggle of  
10 how to handle the nuclear waste that continues to pile  
11 up.

12 As we have learned, no one wants this in  
13 their back yard.            If you opt for the No Action  
14 alternative, we will be forced to live with spent  
15 nuclear fuel in a facility that was only meant to be a  
16 temporary storage site.

1 continued 17 A No Action alternative means the federal  
18 government will continue to deny its responsibility for  
19 the nuclear waste that sits on Prairie Island, and in  
20 71 other communities. And you will be repeating a  
21 pattern of broken promises that our people are all too  
22 familiar with.

23 Perhaps you can ignore the federal  
24 government's legal responsibility; our community  
25 cannot.            Thank you.